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GEOGRAPHIC SUPPORT PROJECT

CUBA: THE TRINIDAD-FOMENTO-TUNAS DE ZAZA TRIANGLE

CIA/RR GP 62-85:L

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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CUBA: THE TRINIDAD-FOMENTO-TUNAS DE ZAZA TRIANGLE

Along the roads of this triangular area are many vulnerable points, especially small bridges and cuts. This report, however, is limited to the particularly vulnerable points along the two main lines of communication that cross the area -- the railroad, a branch of the former Ferrocarriles Consolidados de Cuba that runs from Fomento to Trinidad and Casilda, and the highway, part of the Circuito Sur (Southern Circuit) running from Trinidad to the Fomento-Tunas de Zaza leg of the triangle.

A. Highway Bridges

The five important highway bridges (numbered along the magenta line on the accompanying overlay) in the area are built of reinforced concrete and are constructed to sustain loads of up to 40 tons. The highway is 5 meters wide, and probably it is safe to assume that the bridges are at least that width. The contractor who built the Agabama Bridge -- said to be the longest bridge in Cuba -- is of the opinion that if the Puente Azul and the bridges over the Banao and the Tuinicú (slightly outside the triangle) were to be destroyed, vehicular communication between Trinidad and the Central Highway would be brought to a halt for several weeks. The five vulnerable bridges are:

1. The Puente Azul (Blue Bridge) located 13 kilometers from Trinidad and just south of the town of Iznaga. It is 40 meters long.
2. The Agabama Bridge over the Río Manatí, which is 640 meters long and 50 meters high. It is shown on the Condado sheet (4281 IV) of the 1:50,000 series as five short bridges separated by cuts, but

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other more recent and more reliable sources show it as one continuous bridge.

3. The bridge over the Río Caracusey, 1 kilometer west of the town of Caracusey. No dimensions are available.

4. The Banao bridge just east of the town of the same name. It is 20 meters long.

5. The bridge over the Río Manacas, 11 kilometers southwest of Sancti Spiritus. It is 60 meters long.

B. Railroad Bridges

There are 22 railroad bridges (numbered along the black line on the accompanying overlay) between Trinidad and Fomento. Most of them are small and are of limited consequence in terms of sabotage. Three, however, are either long enough or high enough or both to be difficult to replace or repair in a short time. They are:

1. Bridge No. 10, which crosses the Río de Ay. It consists of five spans supported by four sets of piers. The southernmost span, the one actually above the river, is the highest and consequently is the most critical span. Reportedly, the bridge is in poor condition.

2. Bridge No. 14 which crosses a small right-bank tributary of the Río Agabama (see grid reference PQ 245274, 1:50,000 Sheet 4281 IV). It is estimated to be 100 meters long and about 40 meters high. This steel bridge rests on four steel trestle piers.

3. Bridge No. 15, the Condado Bridge, crosses the gorge of the Río Agabama at one of its deepest points (PQ 246279, 1:50,000 Sheet 4281 IV). It is about 210 meters long and has five spans (four deck spans each 30 meters long and one "part-through" span of 90 meters).

It is of steel girder construction and rests on five or six steel trestle piers. The bridge is about 60 meters high.

C. Cuts

Cuts are numerous along both the railroad and the highway, numbering at least 14 along the railroad between Trinidad and Fomento. From the little information that is available it seems that the deepest and steepest cuts are found along the railroad between 21°55'N and 22°00'N. One vulnerable point on the highway is 4 kilometers east of Trinidad (PQ 090118, 1:50,000 sheet 4281 III). It is not a cut but a natural defile through a hogback. The defile is narrow and although the sides are not steep they are some 60 meters high.

D. Cranes

The 1:50,000 map series indicates the existence of only nine cranes in the area. All of them are concentrated in the southwestern part of the triangle and are shown by red circles on the accompanying overlay.

E. Railroad Repair Shops

Reports indicate that a small railroad repair facility is located in Trinidad. It is probably in the southwestern part of the city next to the railroad station and turning Y. The railroad maintains a warehouse at Casilda but has no major repair facilities. Near the station and turning Y at Fomento is a small building that may contain simple tools.

F. Approach to Vulnerable Points

The areas surrounding most of the vulnerable points are open,

and the possibility of using natural concealment in approaching the points is slight. The area near railroad bridge No. 15 is an exception. The left bank of the Río Agabama in the vicinity of the bridge is fairly heavily wooded and possibilities of concealment are good. Although sheet 4281 IV of the 1:50,000 series does not show it, fairly dense vegetation actually extends almost to the northern end of the bridge.

* The few other bridges not mentioned in this report are shown on the following 1:50,000 sheets:

4281 I
4281 II
4281 III
4281 IV
4282 II
4282 III

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